

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IGA-02 ACDA-07

IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 /086 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:FGERLACH:AC'

APPROVED BY NEA:MSTERNER

NEA/P:GSHERMAN

NEA/ARP:JWTTWINAM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 288449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MU, US

SUBJECT: MASIRAH: PRESS REPORT ON U.S. USE

REF: LONDON 18909

1. PLEASE INFORM DAY THAT, WHILE WE SHARE BRITISH HOPE THAT U.S. REFUELING VISITS TO MASIRAH CAN BE KEPT OUT OF PUBLIC LIMELIGHT, WE SEE NO LAY TO DUCK QUESTION SHOULD IT ARISE WITHOUT ESCALATING THE ISSUE AND CREATING FALSE IMPRESSION THERE IS MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE U.S. USE OF MASIRAH THAN IS THE CASE. AS PRACTICAL MATTER WHEN CONFRONTED BY PRESS WE WOULD WISH NEITHER TO DENY EXISTENCE OF FLIGHTS NOR TO REFUSE COMMENT. HENCE WE ARE UNABLE TO ASSURE FCO THAT WE CAN AVOID MENTION OF U.S. USE ALTHOUGH NATURALLY WE WILL NOT ADDRESS THE QUESTION  
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OF OUR FLIGHTS UNLESS IT IS ASKED DIRECTLY. ALSO PLEASE

NOTE THE GUIDANCE HAS ALREADY BEEN USED HERE IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES, BUT NO STORY HAS APPEARED THERE OR ELSEWHERE IN THE AMERICAN PRESS (OTHER THAN IN "INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN" LAST AUGUST). WE HAVE SO INFORMED UK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AS WELL.

2. PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN REVISED AS FOLLOWS:

3. Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE INTERVIEW OF THE SULTAN OF OMAN IN LE MONDE, WHERE HE IS REPORTED AS SAYING HE IS PREPARED TO ALLOW THE UNITED STATES TO USE MILITARY FACILITIES ON MASIRAH? ARE YOU PLANNING A BASE?

A. YOU WILL NOTE THAT THE OMANI MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAS CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN, OR WILL BE, ALLOWED TO USE MASIRAH AS A MILITARY BASE. TO THAT WE WOULD ADD THAT THERE ARE NO U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL OR U.S. FACILITIES ON MASIRAH. NOR HAS OUR PLANNING BEEN ALONG THE LINES OF ACQUIRING ANY U.S. MILITARY FACILITIES ON MASIRAH OR OF STATIONING U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL THERE. WE UNDERSTAND THE OMANI GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH TECHNICIANS FROM MASIRAH NO LATER THAN NEXT MARCH. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING WHAT YOU CALL A "U.S. MILITARY BASE" ON THE ISLAND.

4. Q. COULD AN AMERICAN BASE BE DEVELOPED, ONCE THE BRITISH LEAVE, SINCE THE SULTAN SAYS HE IS NOW WILLING TO LET THE UNITED STATES USE THE FACILITIES?

A. THAT GETS INTO DECISIONS THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE TO MAKE, WHICH OF COURSE WE ARE UNABLE TO PREDICT. ALL I CAN DO IS REPEAT WHAT I HAVE ALREADY SAID: THERE HAS BEEN NO CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING A "U.S. MILITARY BASE, ON MASIRAH. WE HAVE NO PERSONNEL OR FACILITIES THERE.

5. Q. HAS THE UNITED STATES MADE ANY USE OF THE FACILITIES ON MASIRAH ISLAND?  
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A. I CAN CONFIRM THAT U.S. NAVY RECONNAISSANCE PLANES (P-3'S) HAVE BEEN PERMITTED BY THE OMANIS TO MAKE OCCASIONAL VISITS TO THE BASE ON MASIRAH FOR REFUELING PURPOSES.

6. Q. WHAT ARE THE FREQUENCY OF THE REFUELING STOPS AT MASIRAH? WHERE DO THE FLIGHTS ORIGINATE? WHERE DO THEY

GO? WHAT ARE THEIR PURPOSES?

A. THAT GETS INTO OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS I AM NOT  
PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN DETAIL. ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT  
THESE ARE OCCASIONAL FLIGHTS. ROBINSON

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